

Haig News

SUMMER 2021

HAIG HOUSING'S NEWSLETTER



Congratulations
from all at
Haig to our Patron,
Her Majesty The Queen,
on the occasion of her
95th birthday.

TRUST NEWS • TENANT NEWS • EVENTS • FUNDRAISING • INFORMATION

Introduction by the **Chief Executive**



I cannot believe how quickly time flies when you're busy – I've been at Haig six months already. It's been a strange time for all of us with shielding, vaccinations and emerging from lockdown. We're starting the slow process of rebuilding our lives, visiting old friends and hopefully making new ones. It's not been plain sailing and

unfortunately we've lost good companions on the way. It's been a struggle but if we stick together and look out for each other we will get there. As our gardens spring into life and the flowers bloom, I hope we can look forward to brighter days ahead.

I'm trying to visit as many estates as I can; it's really enjoyable meeting so many special people – you, our tenants. If you can spare time, please stop to chat – I love to hear your news! We recognise that times have been hard, but I'm struck by how much we can do to look after each other. If you're struggling please get in touch, we will try to see what we can do to help. We know that maintenance has suffered over the last year, we're accelerating our plans to do more and will spend an extra £2m this year to

start putting things right. Please let us know if things aren't right.

We are also looking at how we can improve customer service to do a better job for you, our beneficiaries. We are going to redesign the website and improve the tenant portal. We want to communicate better, for example by sending text reminders for visits and appointments. Please make sure we have your correct contact details, especially mobile phone and email if you have them.

I've really been struck by how much of a family we are and I hope that we can grow together. We have some wonderful, dedicated staff who will try to do their best for you. Together we want to be 'Proud to be Haig'.

Tim Stockings
June 2021

Highlights of this issue

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To celebrate our Patron's 95th birthday and her long association with Haig we bring you this beautiful front page photograph of Her Majesty The Queen opening our Centenary Development in Morden in 2019.

The background photograph shows her when she was HRH Princess Elizabeth, together with her husband The Duke of Edinburgh, opening Haig's Jersey estate some 70 years earlier, in 1949.

HM The Queen was born Elizabeth Alexandra Mary on the 21st April 1926 and celebrates this day privately. Her official birthday as monarch is usually marked by the Trooping the Colour Parade in London on the second Saturday in June and a scaled down celebration took place this year in Windsor.

NEW STAFF MEMBERS

It has been a busy time for recruitment and we are delighted this year to welcome the following new members of staff:



Congratulations to **Priyatharshini Kishore**, who has been temping with us for the last year, and has now joined our permanent staff in Finance as Assistant Accountant, in charge of payments and payroll.



David Waggott joined us in January 2021 as our Senior Surveyor, providing us with technical and practical building surveying services and ensuring that tenants receive a customer focused service.



Lindsey Chapple is our most recent recruit having joined us as Operations Officer in May 2021 to provide admin support in the allocation of homes to new tenants.



Robert Williams joined the Trust in March 2021 as our Finance Manager, with input into all aspects of Haig's financial services and processes.



Sandra Hackett joined us in early May 2021 as Finance Officer providing essential admin support and assistance to the Finance Team.

IN MEMORIAM: PHILLIP JOHNSON

On February 16th 2021 our Operations Manager, Phillip Johnson, sadly passed away after a long and recurring illness, which he had endured with stoic courage.

He was a valued and well respected member of the Trust with careers in both the Army as a Sergeant in the Scots Guards Band, followed by a second highly successful career in the Metropolitan Police as a Detective Inspector, working out of Scotland Yard. He joined Haig Housing in 2010 to help set up a strategic partnership with Help for Heroes and worked tirelessly to support and develop the work

of the Trust, responsible for ensuring a smooth transition into suitably adapted properties for our heroic injured veterans and their families.

Phillip leaves behind his wife of 38 years, Vicky, and his two children Jamie 35 and Jessica 33. Jamie returned from Australia to support his father and mother through the last stages of the illness, and was a great source of strength to the family.

Phill was a very special person. We will remember him for his twinkly-eyed quick wit that would always lighten the dulllest of meetings. He was an



enthusiastic bike rider and fundraiser for Haig; a friend as well as a colleague. He was always supportive,

caring, kind and a beautiful soul; truly a gentle man. He leaves a huge hole in our lives, and our hearts.

INTRODUCING THE TRUSTEES

We have three more Haig Trustees here for you to meet who are all legal experts. Trustees are essential to the running of every charity. Our amazing Trustees give us support and guidance, and receive no payment for their time. You can read more about them all on our website.



Neil White has been a trustee of Haig Housing since 2015 and is currently chair of the Estates Committee. Neil was a solicitor in the City of London for 40 years, specialising in construction and property development. Latterly, he was also the firm's General Counsel, responsible, amongst other things, for governance and regulatory compliance.

Neil is also a Trustee of the Sheppard Trust and the Orpheus Centre, a further education college for young adults with special educational needs and disabilities.



Stephen Elliott has worked for over 20 years in the London property market specialising in investment and development work for a variety of private and institutional clients. He joined Haig Housing as a trustee in September 2015 on our Estates Committee to utilise his property industry experience and contacts for our benefit.

Away from work Stephen has a keen interest in sport, particularly cricket and rugby, and volunteers as a rugby coach for London Scottish UI3s as well as playing tennis.



Luise Locke has been a trustee of Haig Housing Trust since 2017; she lives in Edinburgh and is chair of the Haig Scotland Committee as well as chairing our People Committee. She was a partner in an Edinburgh law firm from 1989 and thereafter called to the Scots Bar 2000 to specialise in commercial, agricultural and residential landlord/tenant law.

Since 2006 Luise has been a trustee of the Faculty of Advocates 1985 Charitable Trust and was appointed Chair in October 2014. Luise has also held directorships in private companies and graduated with an MBA from Edinburgh University Business School in 1999.



DAVID STEWART OBE Haig Trustee and Chairman 2003-2015

We are sorry to report the death of our much loved former Chairman David Stewart, who joined Haig as a Trustee in 2003 and became Chairman of Trustees in 2006. He was at the helm when Haig Homes, as it then was, moved from being a small, charitable, ex-Service social housing provider to re-launching as Haig Housing Trust, one of the foremost housing charities for ex-Servicemen and women nationally, and through its 'Coming Home' Campaign, highlighted the growing but unmet need for housing support for many of the country's veterans – a pre-cursor to the military covenant.

He earned an OBE for his charitable work with Haig and his calm steady stewardship of the charity through its period of evolution paved the way for its achievements since, culminating in the Queen's visit in October 2019.

David is also much mourned by his beloved Surrey Cricket Club which he joined in 1995 and saw through a massive period of growth and development. He is the only man in the Club's history to have held all three positions of Treasurer, Chairman and President and was described by his successor, Richard Thompson, as 'in a league of his own'. David died peacefully in March 2021 at the age of 79, after a brief illness.



Family members Dee, her daughter Jaida, Sharon and Sarah-Jean

TRIBUTE TO BILL CUNNINGHAM

Sadly, one of those we lost to Covid earlier this year was Morden estate resident, Bill ('Tractor Boy') Cunningham. We were therefore very happy when his daughters organised a fundraising drive, raising not just enough for a beautiful bench in his memory but also over £1,000 which they kindly donated towards help and support for fellow Haig beneficiaries.

Bill loved the sun and could often be seen sitting outside his home in The Sanctuary, enjoying the sunshine. He had come to live with Haig in 2006 and his family said he loved it here and they also loved visiting him here – he even did a treasure hunt for the grandchildren.

The memorial bench, situated in a peaceful, shaded area just by the tennis court on

the Morden estate, was unveiled at a short ceremony on Tuesday 18th May. This was attended by his daughters and other family, who came from far and wide. Sadly Bill's son and other family members were unable to attend because of Covid restrictions, but a video was taken for them.



Patrick Lyster-Todd reads the poem, with CE Tim Stockings and the family

The service was led by Haig CE Tim Stockings, who spoke about Bill and his past life. Housing Manager Lisa Waterman, who knew Bill well and had arranged the ceremony, also said a few words and Communications Manager and fellow tenant Patrick Lyster-Todd read a poem, a quote from which is below. The Grounds

Maintenance team had done a great job preparing the area and helped with the unveiling.

Bill, who joined the RAF in 1960, had served from Libya to Malaysia and Britain to Borneo and had many passions: above all his family, but also music (and quite the DJ too!), board games, Ipswich

Town Football Club, London East End pubs and good conversation. The apt inscription on his bench reads 'I never met a man I didn't like'.

*Oh! I have slipped the surly bonds of earth
And danced the skies on laughter-silvered wings;
Sunward I've climbed, and joined the tumbling mirth
Of sun-split clouds – and done a hundred things ...*

FROM HIGH FLIGHT BY JOHN GILLES

YOUR SAY ON COVID-19 2021

Thank you for your help!

We were delighted that a massive 430 of you took part in our recent Tenant Survey, and the statistics below are based on those responses.



COMMUNICATIONS

69%

believed the Trust **provided helpful information** during the pandemic. **50%** said communications were just about right, and the others said we have some more work to do.

Only **45%** were aware the Haig website contains a **Daily Bulletin on Covid-19** with links to Government advice, information and helplines.

...



WHAT WE LEARNT

We're pleased a large number responded to the survey, and see the need to have more 2-way conversations. We learnt the importance to **better signpost the website and Daily Bulletin** on Covid-19 information.



HEALTH & WELLBEING

24%

of you said Covid-19 affected your Mental Health
It's been a tough year for many of us. That's why we wanted to reach out to all of you and hear your experiences.

12% said they found it **difficult** at some point to get provisions. **19%** felt **lonely** and isolated, whereas **12%** found **home schooling** difficult.

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HOW WE CAN SUPPORT YOU

Your **Housing Manager** is there as the first point of call to discuss any support that we can give for each individual situation.



REPAIRS

98%

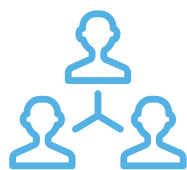
of you did not report any difficulty with routine repairs.

A small number reported difficulties with urgent or emergency repairs.

...

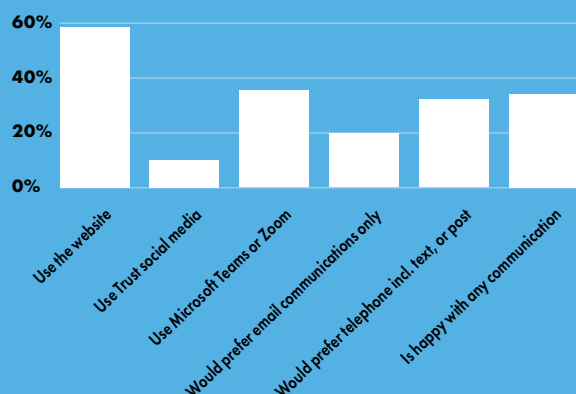


The Trust's **Repairs & Maintenance Department** adapted its call handling during the **Covid-19 lockdown** and we were pleased that few people raised concerns about repairs or maintenance. There were a couple of repairs where we could have done better.



STAYING IN TOUCH

We wanted to know how you wanted us to stay in contact. This could be via our website, emails, phone including text messages or via an app. Also by post, social media and teleconferencing. This is what you said:



58% use the Trust's website, but only **10%** read, comment or share our social media which is where we would like to post more information.

...



WHAT WE HAVE LEARNT

Even though digital is becoming more popular, people would still like to receive information across **all the different types of communication.**



COMMUNITY

Over 49%

of you are happy to take part in **virtual focus groups** to give opinions and thoughts on a wide variety of topics including tenancies, repairs, estate maintenance, pets, poor behaviour, safety and access to additional services or information.

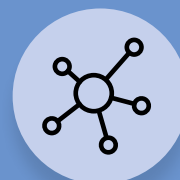
83%

would benefit from a **greater amount of information** about other military charities, grants and local voluntary services.

61%

are interested in helping organise or participate in **'Good Neighbour'** schemes, in the spirit of Captain Sir Tom's legacy for kindness and caring for one another.

...



WHAT WE LEARNT

We were impressed that some of our estates had set up their **own Facebook pages** and there are already some community champions.

We were delighted that nearly half of you offered to help in **focus groups** for the Trust and its work about tenancy and repairs.

We learnt that people wanted **more one-to-one support**, and for us to facilitate community networks.

We will endeavour to work towards providing better communication and signposting to support services, as well as looking to see what role there is for us to play in supporting the Haig community.

HELPFUL FACTS AND ADVICE FROM INCOME DEPARTMENT

- Benefit can only be backdated for 1 month, so it is important to get your claim in.
- Remember to report a change in circumstances on your Universal Credit journal or to your local council.
- The benefit Calculator can be found on the Government website www.gov.uk/calculator and it will help give you an idea if you qualify for any benefits.
- Haig Housing is a private Landlord.
- Your Tenancy Agreement is a legal document and should be stored safely along with the rent increase notices.
- Covid Arrears – we can still take action on arrears accrued during Covid so it is important to contact us and discuss this if you have not already done so.
- To calculate your monthly rent, multiply your weekly rent by 52 and divide by 12.
- Increase your payments on time – Your rent payment must be increased prior to the rent increasing.
- Decoration Allowance, we provide £100 a year, capped at 3 years. As long as your rent has been in advance credit for at least 6 months, you may qualify so email us at Incomes@haighousing.org.uk to find out.
- GDPR – We are unable to speak to anyone other than the tenant, unless we have received a completed Third Party Consent Form. The forms can be found on our website www.haighousing.org.uk if you have not returned them already.
- Up to date details – Form sent, have you returned it? Remember to make sure you keep us up-to-date with your current information.

Please
contact us if you
are struggling on
020 8685 5777
Option 2

WHEN YOU MOVE OUT

We are sorry to say we have had tenants move out who have thoughtlessly left discarded household items, from mattresses to bicycles, in the house and garden, and even dumped on neighbouring land.

Please remember that if this happens Haig has to send in a contractor to clear the rubbish, and we will recharge you for doing this, so it is much cheaper for you to think ahead and dispose of your goods yourself.

It's also very helpful for the incoming tenant if you can arrange with your neighbour to put your bins out if you've left them full.

Photo by Aleksandra / stock.adobe.com

THE CHARLES WRAY IN MEMORIAM 'PENSION FUND'

This is a small charity, managed by Haig, in which grants are made to eligible persons for an amount currently of £500 per annum payable in two instalments, June and December, for a period of three years, after which another application has to be made. Trustees cannot guarantee that future renewals will be granted. The value of future pensions may vary depending on the current value of the fund.

The following qualify as applicants for grants:

1. Persons who are members or former members of any rank and rating of the Armed Forces, or the Merchant Navy or Fishing Fleets, and served in such forces in any war or on active service,

and

2. Who are suffering from any physical nervous or mental incapacity or disablement attributable to or aggravated by such service.

Applications are welcome from anyone who qualifies. Priority has to be given to persons born in

Yorkshire or Croydon, or resident there at the commencement of their Service during which the incapacity was acquired, but demand is currently low so don't let that put you off applying.

Please contact us on 020 8685 5777 or enquiries@haighousing.org.uk for full Pension Fund details and an application form.

Applicants don't have to be tenants of Haig Housing so please pass this information on this to anyone you know who might be eligible.

We get contacted all the time, by telephone, email, post or doorstep callers, and many are not genuine. It might be a scam if:

- it seems too good to be true – for example, a holiday that's much cheaper than you'd expect
- someone you don't know contacts you unexpectedly
- you suspect you're not dealing with a real company – for example, if there's no postal address
- you've been asked to transfer money quickly
- you've been asked to pay in an unusual way – for example, by iTunes vouchers or through a transfer service like MoneyGram or Western Union
- you've been asked to give away personal information like passwords or PINs
- you haven't had written confirmation of what's been agreed

SCAM ALERT!

PROTECT YOURSELF

PROTECTING YOURSELF ONLINE:

- Be careful. Check a company is genuine by reading their reviews or searching for their details on <https://www.gov.uk/get-information-about-a-company>
- Keep your virus protection up to date, don't open emails from companies you don't know, and update your passwords regularly.
- Be cautious about giving personal information away e.g. the name of your primary school or your NI number. This information can be used to hack into your accounts.
- Watch out for fake websites that trick you into paying for services or information that is available for free. Don't necessarily go with the first option. Double check you have the genuine provider.

Be cautious, stay aware, take it slowly, don't let yourself be conned:

- If someone calls you to say there's a problem with your bank account, and you don't have an account with that bank, then it's a scam so you can ignore it.
- If someone texts or calls asking you to pay money so a parcel can be delivered, it's a scam, so ignore it. We've all had this one! You get a link to a website to pay, but it ISN'T the Royal Mail. Don't do it!
- If someone tells you there's a problem with your bank, or a payment, or a bill, say you will check it out, and put the phone down. Make sure the line is clear before you make your next call. And remember, this is probably a scam, and it's most likely that everything is fine.
- Nothing is so immediately urgent that you need to rush into giving out bank details or personal details, or making payments over the phone or internet, to someone you don't know.

WHO CAN I TALK TO IF I'VE BEEN SCAMMED?

- Tell your bank or financial institution immediately if you notice a suspicious transaction from your bank account or credit card. They will try to recover any money lost. They may cancel your current card and send you a new one to stop any other fraudulent transactions from your account.
- Report the scam to the police.
- Contact Action Fraud on <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/reporting-fraud-and-cyber-crime> at any time of the day or night. You can also report fraud by calling the Action Fraud team on **0300 123 2040**.

FIND OUT ABOUT RECENT SCAMS

You can sign up for free to Action Fraud Alert to receive direct, verified, accurate information about scams and fraud in your area by email, recorded voice and text message <https://www.actionfraud.police.uk/sign-up-for-action-fraud-alert>

You can also find out about common financial scams on the Financial Conduct Authority's website. <https://www.fca.org.uk/consumers/protect-yourself-scams>



HAIG CHARITY GOLF DAY

16 JULY 2021 — Dartford Golf Club

All at Bridge are looking forward to their Charity Golf Day and to raising funds for Haig! This is what they told us:

Before the first lockdown Bridge Recruitment UK Limited had chosen Haig Housing as their dedicated charity for 2020. Unfortunately no fundraising events were allowed to take place and we were unable to fulfil our pledge to support the charity in the way we had hoped.

Now that we are starting to move forward from what has been a very strange and somewhat sad time, we are pleased to be able to arrange our 8th Annual Golf Day which, all being well, will take place at Dartford Golf Club on Friday 16 July 2021. We have been organising this since the beginning of the year and now have a field of 98 players who have committed to supporting the day. Our golf days are usually well attended, but this looks to be our biggest one yet!!! We at Bridge are very excited at the potential of the funds we can raise for Haig on the day and are really looking forward to presenting a substantial cheque to them soon after the event.

Thank you Haig for allowing us to work with you. We are proud to be a part of your family.



Rachael Ward-Bradshaw, Haig's Senior Operations Officer, is taking part in Captain Sir Tom's 100 Challenge by giving up chocolate and crisps for 100 days, which would be a huge challenge for anyone! Rachael has already raised over £200. Operations Manager **Lynne Horton**, who is an amazing baker, set out to make 100 cakes and sell them for £1 each and has already exceeded her target. *Thanks to you both for your efforts!*

Haig supporter **Stewart Percy** has undertaken a 100km bike ride for us.

Stewart says 'every veteran and their family deserve a home' and to date has raised the grand sum of £645 for Haig Housing, which is fantastic.



PLEASE TELL US ABOUT YOUR FUNDRAISING EFFORTS AND WE WILL FEATURE THEM IN THE NEXT EDITION OF THE NEWSLETTER.

You can also fundraise for Haig while shopping online!

Shop online at www.smile.amazon.co.uk, choose Haig Housing Trust as your charity, and Amazon will donate 0.5% of the price of eligible purchases at no cost to you. It really is so easy.

Another way to raise funds is to sign up with www.giveasyoulive.com and select Haig Housing Trust as your charity. Through the Give as you Live website, choose from hundreds of online retailers and hit the Shop Now button. Anything you buy will generate a donation of between 1-3% of the purchase price for Haig Housing.



If you would like to fundraise for Haig please contact us on 020 8685 5786 for help and advice

Haig Housing Shop

We have some new items for you which can be ordered through our website, with instant payment through PayPal. Postage and packing costs are as indicated for each individual item.

Go to www.haighousing.org.uk/donation/fundraising-shop

For multiple orders please email us at communications@haighousing.org.uk or telephone **020 8685 5786** and we can give you a cost for the combined postage.

		
	<p>USB stick (16gb) £5.50+£1 p&p</p> <p>Pin badge £2.50 inc p&p</p> <p>Car decal sticker £1.00 inc p&p</p> <p>Card holder £1.00 inc p&p</p> <p>Trolley token £2.50 inc p&p</p> <p>Ball point pen £1.00 inc p&p</p> <p>Umbrella (sm) £3.00+£3.50 p&p</p> <p>Umbrella (lg) £5.00+£3.50 p&p</p> <p>Key ring £2.50 inc p&p</p>	
		

BOOKS



100 Years of Housing Heroes

From the early days of the Great War through to the present day, this fabulous book spotlights the people, anecdotes and history of Haig Housing Trust.

£5 plus £4 p&p



Queen & Country Limited Edition

Fans of the popular portrait and fashion photographer Rankin won't want to miss this beautiful limited edition book with portraits of some of our beneficiaries and supporters who served their Queen and Country.

£10 plus £4 p&p

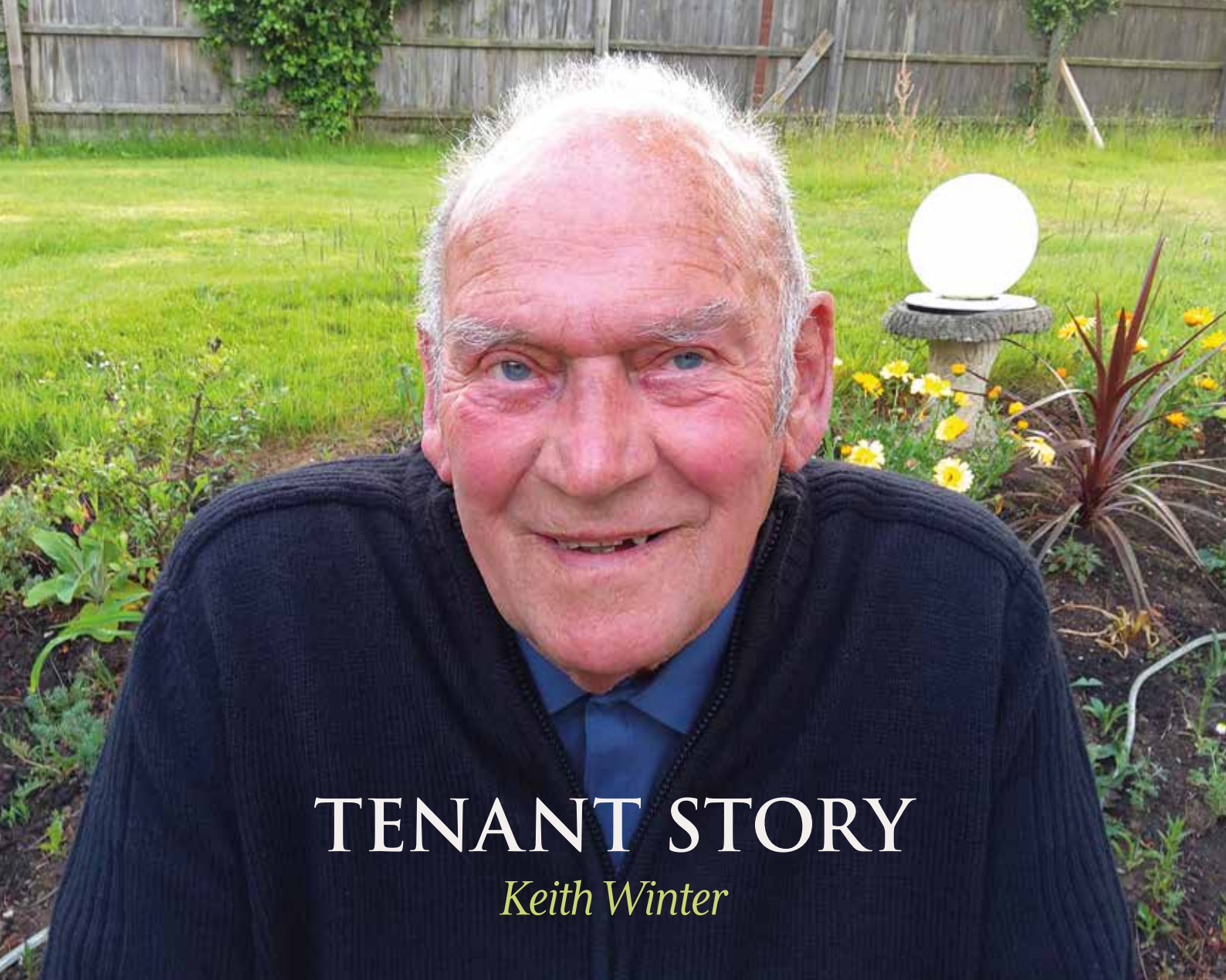
The Long Walk Home

100 Veterans : 100 Years : 100 Miles

Commemorating our amazing event in November 2018, which was to walk from the Menin Gate, Belgium, to the Cenotaph in London. For anyone who would like a memento of this epic adventure, or to show your support for the Haig tenants, staff and supporters who took part.

Hardback £10, Softback £5, both plus £4 p&p





TENANT STORY

Keith Winter

Haig resident Keith Winter, who lives in the Haig estate on the Isle of Wight, served in the RAF as an aircraft fitter and in 1974, upon demob, was employed by Britten-Norman, based at Bembridge, Isle of Wight. Britten-Norman is a privately owned British aircraft manufacturer and aviation services provider, and is the sole independent commercial aircraft producer in the UK.

Keith remained employed with them for 13 years, gaining extensive knowledge of the construction of the Islander aircraft, and on retirement he volunteered to join the restoration team of BNAPS (Britten Norman Aircraft Preservation Society).

He continues to be active in the rebuilding of the aircraft for display in

the museum and has sent us an article from his local paper, the County Press, about the restoration of the third BN-2 Islander aircraft produced at Bembridge, which is one of the oldest of its type in existence.

The article by Lori Little in the IOW County Press details how this aircraft, registration G-AVCN, was first flown from Bembridge Airport on April 24, 1967. A month later it appeared at the Paris Show and on August 18, 1967, was awarded its Passenger Transport Certificate of Airworthiness. It entered service with Aurigny Air Services, based in Guernsey, on the 1st March 1968.

After 32 years in service in the UK and later in the Caribbean region it ended up in a semi derelict state at Isla

Grande Airport in Puerto Rico. Thanks to the efforts of Britten-Norman historians and sponsorship by Airstream International, the Islander was brought home in early 2000, originally to be restored to fly. That did not work out as planned and by 2009 the dismantled remains were in open storage.

With help from Bembridge Heritage Society and local people, BNAPS took charge of the remains and organised transport to a small workshop near Bembridge Harbour in July 2010. Volunteers were recruited to form the restoration team to rebuild the Islander as a high quality static exhibit, and restoration work was started in 2011. By October 2015, after successfully rebuilding the fuselage, it was clear larger premises were

needed to complete the work of rebuilding the wing.

The project moved to a large storage facility at Brickfields near Ryde in March 2016 where restoration work made steady progress and, towards the end of May 2019, the critical wing lift operation was completed and the wing and fuselage were positioned for joining. The aircraft was soon on its wheels and the various stages of final assembly progressed, with the main works finished in December 2019.

The final finishing touches were started in January 2020, but the pandemic and first lockdown caused major delay, and work ceased until July.

With the final aim being to display the aircraft in the Wight Military

and Heritage Museum, near Cowes, work then started to dismantle the Islander for transport. There was a further month's delay due to the second lockdown but the move finally took place in December 2020.

The next few months will see the Islander re-assembled and made ready to go on public display, and BNAPS is planning an official unveiling of the restored aircraft this year, when it will be seen in the colours of Aurigny Air Service. As well as donations from individuals and local businesses, there were grants from the High Sheriff's Trust, the Transport Trust, WightAid

and the Daisie Rich Trust.

The restored Islander G-AVCN is a tribute to John Britten and Desmond Norman and all who worked with Britten-Norman over the years to make the Islander a success. It recognises their achievements as an important part of the Island's aviation heritage.

The final finishing touches were started in January 2020, but the pandemic and first lockdown caused major delay, and work ceased until July.



The dismantled aircraft in 2009

Photo by O'Keefe Press



The aircraft after final assembly January 2020 with engines installed

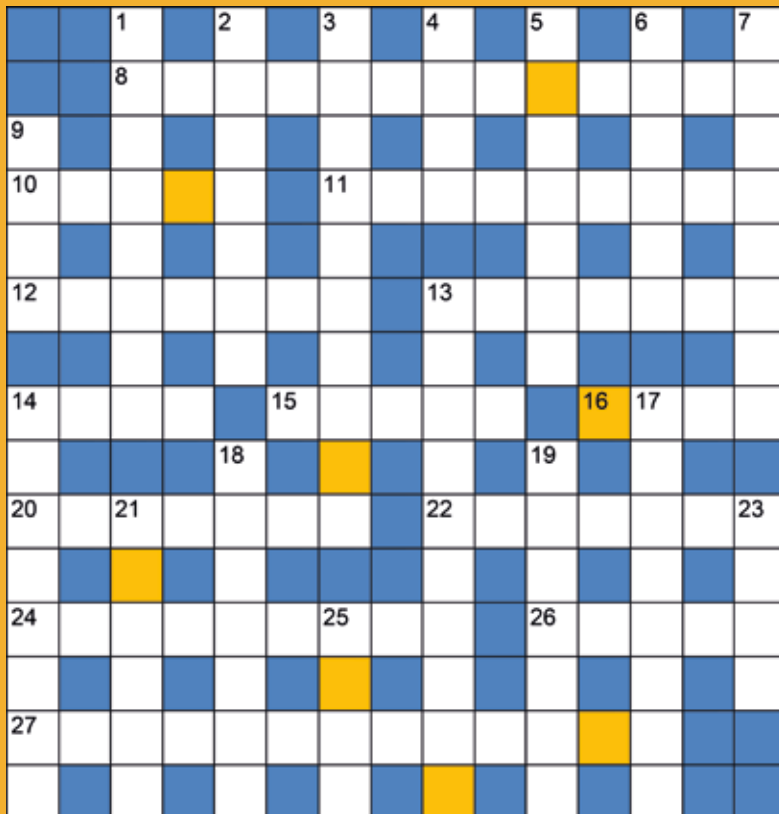
Photo by O'Keefe Press



Photo by O'Keefe Press

The BNAPS team after the successful wing lift in May 2019. Keith is fifth from the left, and says of the venture "I am proud to be a volunteer of the restoration team which has renewed friendships from the past and created a meaningful hobby and social life in my retirement."

QUICK CROSSWORD



The letters in the gold squares spell the location of one of Haig's estates. Email communications@haighousing.org.uk with the name of the estate by the end of September to go in the draw for a Haig memory stick.

Across

- 8 Use this from a distance (6,7)
- 10 A large wicker basket (5)
- 11 Relating to projectiles or their flight (9)
- 12 Coastal town in Dorset (7)
- 13 Popular filled pastry biscuit (3,4)
- 14 Lurid or sensational writing (4)
- 15 Broken and useless (5)
- 16 An unexpected drawback (4)
- 20 Giving a performance (2,5)
- 22 To cause something to start (7)
- 24 An obsessive desire to start fires (9)
- 26 Highest in rank or authority (5)
- 27 Having a sporting award from a top university (9,4)

Down

- 1 Motion having no force other than gravity (8)
- 2 Used for tooth filling (7)
- 3 Part of the same organisation (10)
- 4 Bridge bidding system (4)
- 5 The batting term of a cricket player or team (7)
- 6 Natural cave near water (6)
- 7 A strikebreaker (8)
- 9 Cards with a single pip (4)
- 13 Expressing distress or annoyance (10)
- 14 Likelihood, hope (8)
- 17 A long flowing gown (8)
- 18 To keep for a special purpose (7)
- 19 US president born in 1809 (surname) (7)
- 21 A small crustacean (6)
- 23 A short, repeated phrase in music (4)
- 25 Point of intersection in a network (4)

SUDOKU

Place one each of the digits 1 to 9 in every row, column and 3x3 box. There is only one solution.

			1			3	9	
7	1			5				6
								5
8	2							
1		7					5	
	9	3						4
	3		8	9				
9		1	3		5		2	
	6			7	4		3	

RIDDLES

Can you name three consecutive days without using the words Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, or Sunday?

David's father has three sons, whose names are Snap, Crackle and _____?

What has a head, a tail, is brown and has no legs?

ANSWERS ON
PAGE 19



Veterans Trauma Network

NHS LED VETERANS' CARE IN ENGLAND AND WALES

Did you know that you can use the Veterans Trauma Network (VTN) to access NHS healthcare? The only criteria are that you must be a Veteran and that the physical healthcare issue must be as the result of military service. The service follows existing NHS pathways and is currently available across England and Wales.

WHAT IS IT?

The VTN is a collection of 13 NHS Veteran Trauma Centres (VTC) and four specialist units, each with military and civilian medical experts who will be able to help you with your physical Service-related issues. They will work with you to develop the best clinical plan for your needs.

The VTN will not necessarily prioritise you over other NHS patients. The aim is to get you to the teams who can understand your needs and deal with them appropriately. Your care will be prioritised on clinical need, in the spirit of The Armed Forces Covenant, as would happen with any NHS patient. No other NHS patient will be disadvantaged by the VTN.

WHO IS IT FOR?

You must have served for at least one day in the UK Armed Forces. You must be entitled to routine NHS care (eg meet residency requirements). The health need you have must be as a result of your military service.

WHY IS IT NEEDED?

It has been recognised that some military veterans have specific health issues related to their service. The expertise to deal with these problems can be found in the VTN. Getting you to the right team will be better for you and will support your family and GP. The VTN will also help you and your families to access other kinds of non-medical help and advice.

WHERE?

- The VTCs are in Birmingham; Brighton; Bristol; Cambridge; Leeds; Liverpool; London (three centres); Middlesbrough; Nottingham; Oxford; Plymouth
- The specialist units are in East Grinstead; Frimley Park; Preston; Salisbury

They have clinicians with different specialities in the above locations so your care may not necessarily be local to you. They will find the best person to support your health needs.

WHAT DOES THE VTN DEAL WITH?

Despite the name "trauma", VTN deals with all physical health issues in Veterans as a result of their time in service – from limb loss, traumatic brain injury to service-related fertility issues. They are closely linked with Veterans Mental Health Services and charities such as BLESMA and Blind Veterans UK, so can offer comprehensive care focused around your needs.

HOW?

All that is required for you to do is to tell your GP about the VTN and ask your GP to refer you to the central VTN hub on england.veteranstraumanetwork@nhs.net. They will do the rest and will keep you and your GP informed.



Congratulations to Morden resident Ken Souter who reached the grand age of 102 on the 12th June 2021. We wrote about Ken in the Winter 2019 Newsletter which was the year he celebrated his 100th birthday, and also met the Queen. He was a celebrated RAF pilot in WW2 and flew one of the Lancasters in the celebrated film The Dam Busters in 1954. You can read more about Ken here <https://dambustersblog.com/category/ken-souter/>.

Ken at the opening of Centenary Development, Morden.

Shirley Denson's Story

By Susie Boniface,
Daily Mirror columnist

To her neighbours on the Haig estate in Morden, Shirley Denson was the woman whose door was always open. Through it flowed, daily, a multitude of grandchildren and great-grandchildren, who like many who lived nearby knew her simply as 'Nainie'. But her small home was also the hub of a rebel alliance which had fought successive British governments for decades. Over the years of her involvement, this formidable widow became the unofficial matriarch of Britain's nuclear test veterans, and took delight in being an official pain in the backside for the Ministry of Defence.

Shirley was born well-to-do, the daughter of a doctor. She married a young RAF pilot named Eric Denson, and photos taken soon after their marriage show her in a fur coat and pearls, and him looking dapper in a sharp suit. The couple, both in their 20s, were sent to Germany where Eric flew radar runs along the Iron Curtain, as the West feared an imminent Soviet invasion and an all-out nuclear war. One day in 1958, when she was pregnant with their second daughter, he came home and told her his unit, 76 Squadron, had been posted to the Pacific to take part in trials of Britain's own nuclear bomb.

Eric's task was to pilot a "sniff plane", or converted Canberra bomber, through the boiling maelstrom of the mushroom cloud soon after the blast. The flying conditions were mostly unknown, and utterly perilous. "That's why they needed the best," said Shirley. Eric flew first to Edinburgh Field in South Australia, then on to Christmas Island in the South Pacific. Now known as Kiritimati, it had become the base for the British race to build the hydrogen bomb which, by then, the US and USSR already had.

On the morning of April 28, 1958, Eric and his crew rose before dawn for briefings and breakfast. As they



waited for the weather to clear, thousands of troops who had built runways, maintained generators, and helped the scientists set up shop, were mustered on beaches and warships to watch. Shortly after 10am, a Valiant bomber dropped the weapon codenamed Grapple Y. On the ground, men were told to turn their backs and cover their eyes. After the flash of the detonation they heard the double-crack of the blast, and felt a hot wind burn past them. Told to turn and look, they saw a fearsome, unnatural cloud fill the sky.

Eric's plane, with the call sign Sniff Two, was circling above. A little over an hour after the bang, with the cloud stabilising, he was ordered into it. Records show Sniff Two made two cuts through the cloud, at 51,000ft and 53,500ft - within touching distance of the stratosphere. In all Eric spent just under 9 minutes in the cloud. On landing, he vomited for two days - a classic symptom of radiation sickness. His plane was not decontaminated, and when back on duty he was ordered to fly it again for 'radar calibration' checks.

But it was clear that Eric had, in the words of his superiors, 'exceeded his dose'. He was sent home, where Shirley was delighted to see him but

horrified to find he had a red welt right across his torso. He was also a changed man. "We made love, then he lay there and talked for hours about seeing the face of God," said Shirley. "It wasn't like him at all."

In the years that followed, they had two more daughters, and Eric became extremely unwell. Shirley came home one day and found him putting cigarettes out on his chest. Later, she got up in the night and found him drinking whisky in the kitchen, with an axe beside his chair. When she asked what he was doing, he said: "I'm going to finish this whisky, then I'm going to kill you and the children."

The RAF noticed something was wrong. His work and reputation suffered. Eric would clutch his head, telling Shirley of incredibly painful headaches, and a "black cloud"



This specially written article pays tribute to our late tenant, the indomitable Shirley Denson, who died in March at the age of 86. Shirley spent much of her life fighting for justice from the Ministry of Defence after her RAF husband was ordered to fly through a nuclear cloud in 1958. This is her story, which isn't over yet ...

over him. She told me: "I took him to every psychiatrist and doctor I could find. Military, civilian. They all said they didn't know what it was. It wasn't depression, wasn't schizophrenia, wasn't mania. It was undiagnosable."

Eric was, by now, a Squadron Leader, but unwelcome in the RAF. Shirley had dreamed of him teaching young pilots in places like Saudi Arabia, where his skills would earn them a fortune to see them into old age and set up their girls for life. But it was not to be. He was pensioned off, and, in the long hot summer of 1976, he took himself into the woods outside Oxford, and cut his left wrist. He was 44 years old. He had left a note for Shirley, saying he could go on no longer. It took a few days to find his body, and then Shirley was taken to the woods to identify him.

She was in the prime of her life, but a widow, with four young girls to raise. After half a lifetime in military housing, she had no home, and no income. Haig Homes stepped in, and the family moved to the charity's housing estate in Morden, Surrey, where Shirley found work and the girls had to come to terms not only with the loss of their father, but an utter change in circumstances.

In the 1980s Shirley began to hear about veterans of those nuclear tests, and the strange litany of illnesses their families suffered. She noticed many of her family had missing and extra teeth, as well as spinal and bone problems. She joined the campaign begun by Ken McGinley, who had been a 19-year-old Royal Engineer on Christmas Island at the same time as Eric. He set up the British Nuclear Test

Veterans Association, with the aim of campaigning for official recognition of their suffering. He told me: "Shirley led the way. I said to her once, 'you know, Shirley, you should ask for Eric's records, because he was an officer. They'll have a note of his dose'. She did so,



and what she found opened the door for others to do the same."

In fact what Shirley had opened was 'The Blue Book', an official note of the radiation dose received by members of the RAF at various tests. In it, Eric was recorded as having experienced a blast of 13 Roentgen - equivalent to about 1,300 chest x-rays. She applied for a war pension, was denied, and appealed. "Do you know," she would often say, just as furious every time she thought about it, "the MoD stood up, and said Eric's death was linked to the fact he wet his bed as a child? Well, the lady running the tribunal wouldn't have that! She looked over her glasses at the MoD man, and

said 'I hope you're not going to rely on THAT', and he shrivelled!" The story usually ended with a hoot of laughter at the government man's expense, and she won a pension on the basis that, yes, his death was attributable to his service.

Shirley became a mainstay of the campaign, regularly telling her story to journalists, waving a placard and having her picture taken whenever it was called for. Then one day she received a letter from the MoD, apologising that the enclosed information had not been sent sooner. The packet was devastating - a top secret document detailing what it called "the initial experiment" which had been conducted on the crew of Sniff Two. Scientists wanted to study whether the onboard 'Charlie meter' which took radiation readings was accurate, and so before Eric's plane took off special dose badges were glued to their seats. After the plane landed and the crew had disembarked, readings were taken. They all had experienced a bigger dose than the Charlie meter had registered, but Eric had

the biggest of all - a reading of 19 Roentgen was registered on the badge behind his head. It was the equivalent of an entire lifetime of normal background exposure, delivered to his skull in just eight minutes.

Shirley was adamant from that moment on that Eric's mental illness and suicide were caused by radiation. From that, in turn, she could link all of her family's problems. If you ever pointed out there was no evidence radiation could do that to a brain, she would look at you kindly, and say: "But my dear, HE is the evidence."

In the 19 years that I've now reported on the nuclear test

veterans, I have met many people as determined, and certain, as Shirley. From cancer victims to grieving parents, widows to disabled children, they have the unerring belief that the secret of what happened is in their bones, and perhaps buried somewhere in the MoD. Science is increasingly on their side, and the Mirror is building a cross-party coalition of politicians urging the latest government to do what 25 previous ones have not, and see sense in recognising and honouring men like Eric and their families.

In the final year of her life, Shirley applied for an Elizabeth Cross in Eric's name - one of Britain's highest honours, awarded to any serviceman killed in action or who died as a result of their service. With her war pension, and documents proving he was used in an experiment, Shirley and her friends were certain the MoD must, at least, acknowledge his death was due official recognition. Twice they considered her case, and twice they refused it, on the basis that, while a war pension might have attributed Eric's death to his service, they did not. Their final snub came a few days before her death, at home in Trenchard Court, surrounded by her large and loving family.



Right to the end, Shirley was in love with "my Eric". Whenever I saw her, she had a floaty scarf draped around her neck, forever the young woman who had just stepped out

of the squadron leader's sports car. She was more than just a news story - she was the stuff of legends.

Susie Boniface, who wrote this article for us and gave us permission to use the photographs, is a freelance journalist who has written for The People, Sunday Mirror, Daily Mail, Mail on Sunday, The Times, Guardian, Sun, Daily Express, BBC and Press Association. She also writes as Fleet Street Fox with a column for Mirror Online, award-winning blog and author of the book *The Diaries of a Fleet Street Fox*. This is an abridged version of Susie's article and you can read the full story on our website www.haighousing.org.uk



Do you have any Wrens in your family?

We're not referring to the tiny, feathered variety in the garden but the indomitable ladies who joined the Women's Royal Naval Service. Specifically, ladies who joined up between 1946 and 1981 and did their basic training at Training Depot Burghfield/HMTE Burghfield/HMTE Dauntless/HMS Dauntless/Reading.

Dauntless Divisional Photos is a nationwide project, in collaboration with the Association of Wrens, to gather divisional photographs and memories from those training days and also

to reunite ladies with old friends, share anecdotes and relive exciting moments.

So if you, your mum, granny, aunt, godmother or even next door neighbour donned a blue suit and aimed for a life on the ocean wave, please get in touch on either ddpwrens@gmail.com or 07765 435295 / 07719 909844.

Mandy Powell & Janette Crisp

Project Coordinators - Dauntless Div Photos 46-81

NEW! Small Spaces Gardening Competition!

Not everyone has a garden and many of you achieve spectacular displays with your window boxes, hanging baskets and planters. This summer's competition is especially for you!

Please send a maximum of three photographs preferably in jpeg format to us at communications@haighousing.org.uk by the end of September 2021, or post to us at Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS. **Please note: one photo MUST be taken from a**

distance so we can see how you have used the available space.

We won't exclude you from entering if you also have a garden, but to keep this fair, your entry must show your creativity in only a very small space.

Our expert judging panel will pick a winner and runner-up who will be featured on Haig social media and in the next newsletter and also receive gardening vouchers worth £100 and £50 respectively to help them keep up the good work.



COMPETITION RESULTS AND SOLUTIONS

Crossword Solution Winter 2020

C	H	A	L	L	E	N	G	E	R	Z	J
O	E	N	E	E	X	I	L	E	D		
C	L	I	N	I	C	N	I	L	N	R	
D	G	O	I	A	C	A	K	E			
F	A	L	T	E	R	U	N	T	O	P	Q
L	H	E	E	L	S	I	B	E	A	U	
S	L	I	A	V	O	I	D				
E	J	S	K	I	V	E	B				N
Q	P	A	Y	E	E	E	I	A	C	E	
U	G	L	I	P	W	R	E	C	K	O	
E	U	M	A	L	I	N	E	A	T	L	Y
L	U	M	P	R	Z	J	R	O			
S	E	A	G	A	O	R	A	N	G	E	
F	E	W	E	S	T	R	I	T	N		
D	K	E	N	D	A	N	G	E	R	E	D

The Haig estate to find was **BIRMINGHAM**

Answer to Sudoku on P14

4	5	6	1	8	7	3	9	2
7	1	2	9	5	3	8	4	6
3	8	9	4	2	6	1	7	5
8	2	5	7	4	9	6	1	3
1	4	7	6	3	8	2	5	9
6	9	3	5	1	2	7	8	4
2	3	4	8	9	1	5	6	7
9	7	1	3	6	5	4	2	8
5	6	8	2	7	4	9	3	1

Riddles on P14

1. Yesterday, today, tomorrow
2. David
3. A penny

Newsletter Competition Winter 2020

The cufflinks and commemorative poppy pin were won by Mrs Elizabeth Bentley from Liverpool, and the Emma Bridgewater boxed mug by Mrs Mary Maher of Harrow Weald. To the lucky winners, we apologise it took so long to despatch these items as we haven't been in the office during lockdown.

Pet competition results Winter 2020

We are so sorry that due to the sudden lockdown we struggled to get the Winter edition of the newsletter out to you before Christmas, which didn't leave much time to get your entries in. However your festive pets were featured on our social media and doggy gift sets are on their way to the following winners:



Mrs Liz Bentley entered her dog Tilly, here pictured in her Christmas finery with daughter Heather.



Mrs Mary Smith in Sheffield sent in this picture of her daughter Catherine's Border Collie Molly dressed for Christmas.



Mrs Hilary Baird from Edinburgh has forwarded this picture of Patch enjoying the Christmas season.



A special mention (sorry no prize!) goes to Strawberry the giant African land snail, who belongs to the daughter of Morden resident, Dave Heath.

HOW TO CONTACT HAIG

Our postal address is **Haig Housing, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden, Surrey SM4 5NS.**

Our telephone number is **020 8685 5777**. This number is staffed Monday to Fridays from 9am to 5pm. Outside these times and on Bank Holidays the number will automatically transfer, after a short delay, to our Emergency Maintenance Operator. Please note if you have a **GAS EMERGENCY** you should phone **0800 111 999**.

Our email address is **enquiries@haighousing.org.uk**. You can also contact us on social media, but should note that we may not be able to reply outside working hours.



/haighousing



/ComingHomeOrg



/HaigHousingTrust



This is *your* newsletter.

Please help us to make it relevant to you.

Please let us know about the commemorations, celebrations, anniversaries and fundraising happening in your area and we will do our best to include your news in our next issue. We are also hoping more Haig residents will share their life stories in future editions, and if that could be you, please email **ann.clark@haighousing.org.uk**, telephone **020 8685 5777**.

Is English not your first language?

If you need any Haig official information translated or need a translator for any verbal communication with Haig Housing then please contact our Head Office to arrange this.

Do you have a visual impairment?

If you need copies of any Haig information in **LARGE PRINT** or **BRaille** then please contact our Head Office.

PRODUCTION

Produced by Haig Housing with contributions from beneficiaries, Veterans, staff and supporters. Thanks to all of you.

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If you want to comment on this edition or contribute to the next newsletter please contact Ann Clark, Haig News, Alban Dobson House, Green Lane, Morden SM4 5NS, telephone 020 8685 5777, email ann.clark@haighousing.org.uk

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THE NOT FORGOTTEN